

Lost Hills Solar Project Habitat Conservation Plan & Environmental Assessment

Questions and Answers



1. What is a habitat conservation plan?

A habitat conservation plan is a planning document that is required as part of an application for an incidental take permit. It describes the anticipated effects of the proposed taking, how those impacts will be minimized or mitigated, and how the habitat conservation plan will be funded.

Habitat conservation plans can apply to both listed and non-listed species, including those that are candidates or have been proposed for listing. Conserving species before they are in danger of extinction or are likely to become so can also provide early benefits and prevent the need for listing.

2. What is an environmental assessment?

An environmental assessment is an analysis of the short- and long-term effects a proposed action can have on the human environment.

3. How can people submit their comments?

The 30-day comment period ends September 1, 2017—so any time before that deadline, people can submit their comments by U.S. Mail, in-person, or internet. Comments received or postmarked after September 1, 2017 will be considered to the extent practicable.

Internet: www.regulations.gov under Docket No. FWS-R8-ES-2017-0034

U.S. Mail or Hand-Delivery:

Public Comments Processing
Attn: FWS-R4-ES-2017-0034
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

4. How much land is included in this habitat conservation plan?

The plan area includes 540 acres. The project will occupy approximately 160 acres within the plan area. The proposed habitat conservation plan will result in the purchase of 133 acres of species habitat and natural lands.

5. Why is the incidental take permit period 45 years?

This permit term encompasses the entire life of the project—all construction and testing activities, as well as the full operational life of the project and its decommissioning; which includes the removal of all project facilities including, but not limited to, access roads, fencing, structures, foundations, concrete pads, underground cabling, wires, conduits, solar panels, mounting systems, and support systems.

6. What species is covered by the habitat conservation plan?

The federally endangered [San Joaquin kit fox](#).

7. What will be done to offset the effects to the San Joaquin kit fox?

The habitat conservation plan encompasses avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures including project design features, as well as specific measures that will be implemented during the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning to address the effects of the project on the covered species. The plan also includes the restoration of temporarily impacted habitat and the purchase of conservation credits at a conservation bank for permanent impacts.

8. How will the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service monitor the project to make sure species are protected?

The conservation plan includes a monitoring and reporting program to ensure compliance with and progress toward the goals and objectives of the plan. The reporting program includes quarterly reports during construction and decommissioning, as well as annual status reports for the life of the permit.

9. How will residents of Kern County be affected?

The impact this project will have on Kern County residents is expected to be minimal because this project is relatively small (approximately 160 acres) and will be constructed in a rural, sparsely populated part of western Kern County.

10. What activities does the habitat conservation plan allow Lost Hills Solar, LLC to conduct?

The covered activities in the plan include activities associated with the construction of a 20-megawatt solar photovoltaic power generating facility, the operations and maintenance of the facility and the decommissioning of that facility at the end of the permit term. A complete list of covered activities is included in the conservation plan.